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Executive Registry
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5 February 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : CIA R&D and Testing of Behavioral Drugs

1. Attached is a paper summarizing CIA interest over the years in behavioral drugs. We believe that this touches on all R&D programs that the Agency has conducted in the past, including the incident involving the death of an employee of the Department of the Army in 1953. Records do not permit a description of such relationships as may have existed between these various activities; it is apparent that there was some sharing of information between different components in the Agency, and some overlap in time, but there also are indications of independent approaches to the problem.

2. We have been informed by ADDO that although the DDO has an instruction on behavioral drugs -- MKDELTA -- this was established against the event that some such materials became available and has never been implemented in fact. There are no operational records in the DDO in this connection.

3. We can sanitize the paper for transmittal to the investigating authorities when you have reviewed it.

(b)(3)

[redacted]

Donald F. Chamberlain
Inspector General

Attachment a/s
cc: Mr. Knoche

(b)(3)

[redacted]

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Behavioral Drugs, and Testing

1. CIA has had a recurring interest in behavioral drugs. The subject is of general interest because of the operational applications that could be made against Agency employees by hostile forces, for which there would be a defensive requirement, as well as for possible use against foreigners to influence their behavior. The earliest record of this interest dates to the post-WWII period when there were indications of Soviet interest in the use of drugs for such purposes, the most famous example being the bizarre confessions of Cardinal Mindszenty in February 1949.

2. In the past CIA's interest has taken form in four programs. Some of these activities, described separately below, have some coincidence or overlap in time, but existing records do not make possible a clear determination of what relation, if any, there may have been between them.

BLUEBIRD/ARTICHOKE

3. In 1949 the Office of Scientific Intelligence (OSI) undertook the analysis of foreign work on certain unconventional warfare techniques, including behavioral drugs, with an initial objective of developing a capability to resist or offset the effect of behavioral drugs. Preliminary phases included the review of drug-related work at institutions such as [redacted] There also was extensive review of foreign literature, particularly work in the Soviet Bloc. This program shortly became Project BLUEBIRD, with the objectives of (a) discovering means of conditioning personnel to prevent unauthorized extraction of information from them by known means, (b) investigating the possibility of obtaining control of an individual by application of special interrogation techniques, (c) memory enhancement, and (d) establishing defensive means for preventing hostile control of Agency personnel.

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4. In August 1951 Project BLUEBIRD was renamed Project ARTICHOKE which, in 1952, was transferred from OSI to the predecessor organization of the Office of Security. OSI did retain a responsibility for evaluation of foreign intelligence aspects of the matter and in 1953 made a proposal that experiments be made in testing LSD with Agency volunteers; OSI records indicate that no such experiments were made. OSI's involvement in this project was terminated in 1956. Meanwhile, the emphasis given ARTICHOKE in the predecessor organization to the Office of Security became that of use of materials such as sodium pentothal in connection with interrogation techniques and with the polygraph.

5. During this period there was an informal Agency group known as the ARTICHOKE Committee, with representation from the Offices of Scientific Intelligence (OSI) and Medical Services (OMS), and the predecessor organizations of the Offices of Security and Technical Services (OTS). There are no records indicating the details of the exchanges in this committee, although there are references in fragmentary records of continued interest in LSD. It is believed that the exchanges were technical in nature but there is reference in papers in the records held by the Office of Security of something referred to as an ARTICHOKE Team travelling overseas in 1954, with indications of operational applications to individuals representing a Communist Bloc country. There is no record of the operation or its results.

Drug-related Death of an Investigation

6. The predecessor organization of the Office of Technical Service also was interested in behavioral drugs, although none of the office's records on this activity are in existence, having been destroyed in January 1973. As noted above it participated in the meetings of the so-called ARTICHOKE Committee. That office maintained liaison with personnel at Camp Dietrick, with whom meetings were held once or twice a year to discuss questions involving behavorial drugs. At one such meeting at Deep Creek Lake in Maryland, 18-19 November 1953, with seven representatives from Camp Dietrick and three from CIA, eight of those present were administered LSD which had been introduced into a bottle of Cointreau. Although records of an inquiry by the Inspector General into the incident indicate that those present discussed testing on unwitting persons, and agreed in principle that such a program should be





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explored, none of them were advised until some 20 minutes after they drank the Cointreau that it had been treated with LSD. Of the two who did not take it, one did not drink alcoholic beverages at all and the other refrained because of a heart condition. One of the members of the group, a civilian employee of the Department of Army named Frank R. Olson, had serious after-effects. He was sent at CIA expense, with an escort from CIA, to New York where he received treatment from a psychiatrist, commencing 24 November. While in New York for this treatment he threw himself through a closed window in his room on the tenth floor of the Statler Hotel, falling to his death. CIA, in a document of 9 December 1953, signed by its General Counsel, certified that Dr. Olson's death resulted from "circumstances arising out of an experiment undertaken in the course of his official duties for the United States Government." This was the official position of the Agency, established for the purpose of assuring that the survivors of Dr. Olson received compensation from the BEC. Dr. Olson had experienced some instability and delusions prior to the incident, and it was judged that the drug served to trigger the act leading to his death. Official reprimands were issued by the DCI to three CIA employees held responsible for the incident.

MKDELTA/MKULTRA/MKSEARCH

7. On 29 October 1952 a formal policy was established by the Deputy Director of Plans (as then styled, now Deputy Director for Operations) for the use of biochemicals in clandestine operations (MKDELTA). This was brought under a special funding procedure established on 3 April 1953 for special research purposes (MKULTRA). The program considered various possible means for controlling human behavior of which drugs were only one aspect, others being radiation, electro-shock, psychology, psychiatry, sociology, anthropology, harrassment substances, and paramilitary devices and materials. There were contacts with individuals at such institutions as [redacted] (b)(3) [redacted] (b)(3) [redacted] as well as with various pharmaceutical houses, hospitals and federal institutions, the names of which are no longer available. Among the materials studied were psylocbin from Mexican mushrooms, a fungus occurring in certain crops, and LSD. Following laboratory testing a second phase was begun which involved testing on voluntary participants. The final phase involved (b)(3) (b)(3)





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application on unwitting subjects, in normal social situations, commencing in 1955 under an informal arrangements with individuals in the Bureau of Narcotics. Originally conducted on the West Coast, a similar arrangement was instituted in 1961 on the East Coast. Such tests were conducted from time to time until 1963 when the Inspector General discovered the activity and questioned the program. At that time it was reported that in a number of instances test subjects became ill for hours or days following the application, and there was one reported instance of hospitalization, the details of which are no longer available. Project records do not now exist, but it is reported that the project was decreased significantly each budget year until it was completely terminated in the late 1960's.

8. Following the Inspector General's challenge of the program, there was a review of its nature and it was resubmitted for approval under the name of Project MKSEARCH, recommending continuation of the testing; the written proposal did not specify whether it was to be limited to volunteers. Records indicate that the DCI did not approve this, and it is understood that there was no renewal of this aspect of the activity. Funding for MKSEARCH commenced in FY-1966, running through 1972. There were various research activities carried on under it, but the only aspect related to behavioral drugs dealt with an inquiry in improvement by drugs of learning ability and memory retention; under this there is a record of testing at [redacted] on volunteers. (b)(3)

OFTEN/CHICKWIT

9. In 1967 the Office of Research and Development (ORD) and the Edgewood Arsenal Research Laboratories undertook a program for doing research in influencing human behavior with drugs. A phased program was envisioned that would consist of acquisition of drugs and chemical compounds believed to have effects on the behavior of humans, and testing and evaluating these materials through laboratory procedures and toxicological studies. Compounds believed promising as a result of tests on animals were then to be evaluated clinically with human subjects at Edgewood. Substances of potential use would then be analyzed structurally as a basis for symthesizing new derivatives of greater utility.





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10. Samples of drugs and chemicals were obtained from drug and pharmaceutical companies, government agencies such as Edgewood, NIH, FDA and the Veterans Administration, as well as from research laboratories and individual researchers. Most of the materials came from the drug industry, consisting largely of substances that had been rejected because of undesired side effects from the point of view of medicinal use.

11. Project OFTEN dealt with testing the behavioral and toxicological effects of drugs in animals and, ultimately, humans. Project CHICKWIT was to acquire information on new drug developments in Europe and the Orient, and acquiring samples.

12. A panel was established to review the program, with membership from ORD, and the predecessor organization to the Office of Technical Service. Meetings were held periodically, and briefings were given senior officials from time to time. The principal contractor under OFTEN [redacted] (b)(3) commencing FY-1966. The association with Edgewood started with a transfer of funds to Edgewood in FY-1967, for work to be done by [redacted] under CHICKWIT. Synthesis of new drugs and derivatives was contracted with [redacted] (b)(3) starting FY-1971. Data from this program was merged into a computer controlled data base with test data and information from other sources. One substance identified as a potential incapacitant was in an area known to be the subject of research by the Soviet Union, being considered a potential threat to U.S. leaders because of the ease with which it could be administered. Study of this material progressed to testing in 1971-1972 at Edgewood. This involved twenty volunteers, five from the [redacted] (b)(3) and fifteen military volunteers. Records and evaluations held by CIA are limited, the program being terminated in January 1973 when final reports had not yet been prepared. Edgewood completed the follow-up testing required because of the prolonged after-effects, for which it billed CIA in April 1973, but did not provide CIA with the results. The work that continued after CIA's termination of the project was the completion of testing protocol, including interviews of subjects.

With CIA's termination of the program, the material was withdrawn from the CIA computers, the tapes and limited records being sequestered and stored under special controls where they still are.



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